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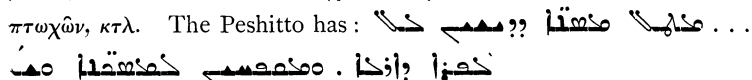
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## Notes on Amos ii. 7, vi. 10, viii. 3, ix. 8-10.

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ii. 7. The only way to make sense of the first clause of this verse is to follow the ancient versions (as in the similar passage viii. 4) in rendering השאפים by 'bruise,' 'beat,' 'trample upon,' or something of the kind, whether the form is supposed to belong to the root שוף,<sup>1</sup> or not. But the difficulty of the clause is not thus removed. The words על עפר ארץ are decidedly out of place. They do not admit of a natural translation; moreover, the oldest versions offer at this point a suspicious variation from the reading of the Hebrew text. The best attested Greek rendering of the close of vs. 6 and the beginning of vs. 7 is the following: . . . ἔνεκεν ὑποδημάτων, τὰ πατοῦντα<sup>2</sup> ἐπὶ τὸν χοῦν τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἐκονδύλιζον εἰς κεφαλὰς πτωχῶν, κτλ. The Peshitto has:  . . .

G. A. Smith, in his recent *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*,<sup>3</sup> speaks of this passage as an unsolved riddle, and refers doubtfully to Wellhausen's emendation of the Hebrew text as perhaps the best makeshift to be had. It is true that Wellhausen's explanation<sup>4</sup> is hardly adequate, though he emends the text correctly, as I believe. He omits the offending words על עפר ארץ, as superfluous, and dismisses the clause τὰ πατοῦντα . . . τῆς γῆς with the remark that it is "ein unkonstruierbarer Nachtrag." I believe it is possible to account satisfactorily for the variety of readings here on the supposition that the original Hebrew text read simply, השאפים בראש, דרלים,<sup>5</sup> the nature of the subsequent additions showing their origin

<sup>1</sup> Baur, *Amos*, 1847, p. 267 f.; Wellhausen, *Skizzen*, V., 1892, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> A good many MSS. have τῶν πατοῦντων (καταπατοῦντων).

<sup>3</sup> *The Expositor's Bible*, 1896.

<sup>4</sup> *Skizzen*, V., pp. 6, 72.

<sup>5</sup> An instance of שוף c.c. ב, *Pesachim* 39 b. I am indebted to Professor Moore for this reference.

plainly, so that there need be no hesitation in accepting Wellhausen's emendation.

All the versions, including the Hebrew, contain a double reading in more or less complete form. This doublet appears in full in the LXX. and Pesh., where the grammatical construction and the punctuation show how the secondary clause was intended, and, at the same time, how it originated. The somewhat peculiar use of the participle, in which Amos especially delights, gave rise in this case to ambiguity. Amos constantly uses the active participle plural in what might be called an exclamatory way, as if he were pointing indignantly at those whose evil habits he is describing. It is his favorite way of returning to the invective against his countrymen, irrespective of the grammatical construction that has just preceded. Thus: **הַאֲצֵרִים חָמָם**, "These who are all the time storing up violence!" (iii. 10) ; **הַנִּשְׁקֹתִים**, "Ye who are oppressing!" (iv. 1) ; so **הַדּוֹפְכִים**, v. 7 ; **הַמְנַדִּים**, vi. 3, 4 ff., 13, etc. In the case before us it was very easy for the reader to connect the participle **הַשֹּׂאֲפִים** with the word **נֹעֲלִים**, which it immediately follows. The two would seem naturally to belong together. So, side by side with the true interpretation, "These [men of Israel] who bruise the poor man's head!" grew up the other, "They sell . . . for a *pair of shoes that trample*."<sup>6</sup> It was this trampling of the shoes that was further described by the addition of the words **עַל עֵפֶר אֶרֶץ**. The addition is evidently an old one, and was very likely first written in the form of a marginal gloss. In the Greek and Syriac versions the result is two distinct clauses, **הַשֹּׂאֲפִים** being represented in each ; in the Massoretic text there is only one clause, but it is in reality a mixture, the words **עַל עֵפֶר אֶרֶץ** belonging to the secondary interpretation.

vi. 10, viii. 3. It might seem to be of little use to attempt to patch where there are so many holes ; still, the case in viii. 3 is far from hopeless, and even in vi. 10 the meaning of the verse as a whole is plain. There is one cause of disturbance, appearing in both verses, concerning which I should like to offer a conjecture. The two passages have this in common, that each describes the utmost horrors of war and pestilence in the cities of Israel. Corpses lie in every place, even in the Temple precincts ; in the proudest houses of the city only dead bodies are left. In each of these

<sup>6</sup> The true character of the participle, shown by the article, was kept in view nevertheless, as the accusative case in the Greek translation shows.

descriptions of the same terrible scene, the presence of the interjection **הם** is a potent cause of trouble. In vi. 10 it is imbedded in a clause which seems to have been added as an afterthought and admits of no satisfactory interpretation; in viii. 3 it is entirely out of connection with the rest of the verse. The coincidence suggests that the word **הם** was not in either case a part of the original text, but made its way in by accident; and that the explanation of the accident is in both cases to be sought for in the nature of the verse. It is easy to comprehend how at these two culminating points in the prophet's threat, where desolation and desecration reach their utmost limit, the pious ejaculation — a sort of *favete linguis* — should have been put in the margin, and ultimately have found its way into the text. The last clause of vi. 10, a manifest appendage, grew up about the interjection as a natural interpretation of it. For the construction **לֹא לְהוֹבִיר**, generally found in later Hebrew, see Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, § 202, 2.

The conditions described in vi. 9, 10 are those of the pestilence that follows war; the inevitable sequel so often portrayed by the prophets. If any family seems to have escaped the sack of the city (vs. 8 *b*), so that *as many as ten* are left,<sup>7</sup> they shall all fall victims to the pest. So far from being out of place (as Wellhausen concludes), the passage forms a most telling climax to the prophet's threat.

**ix. 8-10.** A satisfactory theory as to the way in which Amos' prophecy originally ended has hitherto been wanting. There is nothing in the closing part of ch. ix., from vs. 11 on, that reminds at all of Amos, or gives any connection with the preceding chapters; but, on the contrary, every indication shows it to be of post-exilic origin. By critics who hold this view, vs. 7 is generally regarded as the last of Amos' own writing. But his book cannot possibly have ended with vs. 7; and I think it will be seen, on closer examination of vs. 8-10, that the difficulty with them lies simply in one or two interpolated clauses, while in the remainder the hand of Amos is everywhere present.

In these verses, sweeping threats are counterbalanced by mitigating clauses in a very noticeable way. What is solemnly promised in one breath is taken back in the next. Vs. 8 *a* is thoroughly characteristic of Amos. **הַשְׁמַדְתִּי**, "I will utterly destroy," is used by him as in ii. 9, where he is speaking of the extermination of the Amorites.

<sup>7</sup> Against Wellhausen, *Skizzen*, V., p. 85.

But in the second half of the verse, the sharp edge of the threat is at once taken off by the added clause **אִפֹּס . . . יֵעָקֵב**. The same thing happens in vs. 9. As far as the word **בִּכְבֻּרָה**, idea and expression are in every way such as to remind of Amos. It is his oft-repeated threat of captivity in a foreign land, and the figure he uses — that of the sieve — is original and forcible. For the formula **מִצֹּר . . . כִּי**, cf. vi. 11. But the last clause of the verse gives the prediction a sudden twist, so that it sounds more like a blessing than a curse, after all. The effect is bewildering, and the explanation undoubtedly this, that here as in the preceding case the verse has been retouched. Vs. 10 is as characteristic as anything in the book. There is one point at which Amos gives all his strength to the attack on his countrymen, namely, when he comes to deal with their over-confidence. This verse might well be taken as the motto of the book: "This sinful people of mine shall all perish with the sword; — *these who say, the evil day shall not reach us!*"<sup>8</sup> In **הָאֲמִרִים** we have the characteristic use of the participle, above alluded to. If the phrase **כָּל חַטָּאֵי עַמִּי** be translated as I have rendered it above, 'all my sinful people,' according to a not uncommon idiom (cf. the examples in Davidson, *Syntax*, § 24 a), there is nothing to object to in the verse. Otherwise, **חַטָּא** would have to be cancelled as another product of the reviser's hand, for Amos makes no exceptions in his prediction of calamity for Israel.

The conclusion is, then, that Amos' prophecy ended with ix. 10. A more suitable close could not be imagined. The additions in vs. 8 f. were made by the hand that appended vs. 11 ff. The transition to the light and comfort of this appendix must be startling in any case, but these two added clauses had the effect of softening the contrast considerably.

<sup>8</sup> Read, with Hoffmann and Wellhausen, **לֹא תֵשׁ וְתִקְרָם עֲדֵינוּ הָרָעָה**.